

Somerville Housing Authority

Community Room Use Policy

Whereas, it is the intention of the Board of Commissioners of the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) to provide residents and resident associations with a full range of opportunities while maintaining responsible care, order, and utilization of community room spaces,

And whereas, the Board of Commissioners seeks to preserve integrity, fairness, and neutrality, while maintaining their own non-involvement in the administration of these spaces,

The Board hereby adopts the following policy relative to the use of community spaces in SHA developments by residents or associations:

Meetings, events, functions, etc. must be held within the building, the grounds of the building cannot be used without prior consent of the authority. Requests to use a community room must be forwarded to the housing manager. The housing manager will examine all pertinent information to properly consider requests for use. Information considered will include the purpose and hours of use, as well as compliance with board of health regulations concerning food preparation, food service and disposal. Under extraordinary circumstances, the authority may require that an insurance certificate or police detail be assigned to a function. This policy will not preclude the resident association from conducting their regularly scheduled monthly meetings, emergency meetings, or special occasion functions as a matter of right and without prior SHA approval.

Following are some examples of appropriate use of the community rooms:

- 1) Educational use - such as; nutritional counseling, health seminars, exercise, age group mix, lectures.
- 2) Entertainment – such as; Holiday parties and musical or theatrical entertainment.
- 3) Group activities – such as; Spiritual meetings, rummage sales, bake sales, bingo games, card games.
- 4) Political events – such as; voting precincts, candidate nights, community political meetings.

Residents reserving the community spaces are responsible for returning the community space to its original condition. Damage charges will be assessed to cover the costs of materials and labor needed to restore community spaces to their original condition.

A file will be maintained on community space activities, indicating dates, number of participants, and general comments. Community space activities will be posted on the bulletin board calendar.

If no routine association activities are scheduled, assigning use of the Community spaces shall be as follows:

FIRST PRIORITY:

Residents or resident associations planning to make use of the community space for the sole benefit of the residents.

SECOND PRIORITY:

Individuals or groups volunteering or responding to invitations to provide educational programs and/or entertainment to residents.

THIRD PRIORITY:

Compatible groups and organizations that can be expected to cooperate and assist the housing authority in various ways.

Associations and individual residents are encouraged to exercise their obligations and rights in a thoughtful and responsible manner that is fair to all political candidates and supportive of the principles of our democratic process. The authority policy for campaign events is:

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES:

Candidates are welcome to host campaign events in community rooms with the prior approval of the housing manager. Similarly, elected officials that choose to conduct district office hours in a community space may do so upon prior pre-approval. However, community rooms can only be used by elected officials for district offices during non-election years.

Door to door solicitation is prohibited at all times. Distributing pamphlets or knocking on doors to solicit residents is strictly prohibited; however, residents of the buildings are allowed to distribute materials on behalf of a candidate.

Campaigns are prohibited from setting up in community rooms or common areas on Election Day. Unlike prior campaign activities, voter turnout tactics result in all candidacies maneuvering for presence and poses a safety problem.

Candidates are required to keep Election Day transport vehicles out of parking spaces under the control of the SHA.