



## **Diana's Workshop in New York**

**Get More Community in Your Life!**

# **Starting a Successful Ecovillage or Intentional Community**

**Sat & Sun, February 14-15**

**9:00 am – 5:30 pm**

**Workshop space at North Star Fund,**

520 Eighth Avenue, between 36<sup>th</sup> & 37<sup>th</sup> Streets, 22<sup>nd</sup> floor  
New York, New York

With lively exercises, humorous musical skits, and vivid anecdotes about real problems and their successful solutions in intentional communities, Diana focuses on what works, what pitfalls to avoid, and how not to reinvent the wheel. Steps and methods that worked well for founders of successful new communities, what continues to work well in healthy and thriving communities . . . and cautionary tales from community start-ups that failed.

Remedies for the most common kinds of “structural conflict” as well as interpersonal conflict; vision, values, mission & purpose; effective decision-making methods; new-member policies; dealing effectively with “challenging group members”; case studies of property purchase, financing, zoning, and legal entities for shared property ownership.

The workshop benefits forming community groups (with property as well as those with no property) as well as existing communities.

### **Sponsors:**

***Local Energy Solutions*** – [www.localenergysolutions.com](http://www.localenergysolutions.com)

***More Gardens!*** – [www.moregardens.org](http://www.moregardens.org)

***Easton Mountain Center*** – [www.eastonmountain.com](http://www.eastonmountain.com)

### **For More Information:**

Philip, [info~at~localenergysolutions.org](mailto:info@localenergysolutions.org). 718-441-0246.

### **To Register:**

**Brown Paper Tickets** - [www.BrownPaperTickets.com/event/49915](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com/event/49915)

**Early registration** (12/1 – 1/15/09) **\$200**

**Registration** (1/16 – 2/11/09) **\$225**

**Late registration** (2/12 – 2/14/09) **\$250**

## **What the Workshop Will Cover:**

### ***Saturday, February 14:***

**(1) Reducing and eliminating "Structural Conflict."** Identifying and briefly discussing six crucial organizational structures that, when missing, can cause failure in forming-community groups or wrenching conflict in existing communities.

These structures include • Common Mission & Purpose • Clear Agreements in Writing • Fair, Participatory Decision-Making Method (and if it's consensus, getting trained in it before using it) • Valuing & Using Both Head & Heart Skills • Good Communication & Group Process Skills (including accountability methods, and having a conflict-resolution method in place from the beginning) • Well-Organized New-Member Policy (including selecting cofounders and new members who will be a good match for the group and its goals).

Some structures are explored in more depth, including Mission & Purpose (including the musical skit, "*That's Not Community!*"), and "Decision-Making, Power, and Governance," about how the most number of people can get most of what they want, most of the time.

Diana considers the single most helpful part of this workshop to be the "Board Game"—learning about the crucial, mutually influencing relationship between a group's mission & purpose, its decision-making method, and its new-member policy.

This section also notes the many kinds of community practices—agenda planning, well-crafted proposals, meeting evaluations, decision logs, labor requirements, labor credit policies, and many more—which can make all the difference in helping communities keep morale high and reduce stress.

**(2) Creating Communication Agreements.** Creating such agreements increases energy and satisfaction in meetings and helps reduce the level of distrust and hurt feelings that can result from people having differing communication styles during meetings. Experiential small-group exercise.

**(3) Helping People Stay Accountable to the Group.** Three effective, no-shame/no-blame ways to help each other stay accountable to group agreements, and how to use a "graduated series of consequences" process when people consistently break agreements. These processes help raise the level of trust in the group and reduce the amount of resentment and demoralization that can occur when people don't abide by their agreements. Includes role-playing exercise.

**(4) Building a Sense of Trust and Connection.** These first three

methods help reduce the kinds conflicts that can devastate a group and quickly erode trust between members. A group can also do processes that specifically build trust and connection—so when conflict does arise it's much easier to deal with than if trust levels were lower. Experiential whole-group exercise.

***(5) Dealing Effectively with "The Challenging Person."***

Sometimes a group has a member who is so challenging that some people want to leave the group (or do leave!). This is a highly effective, relatively widespread (but usually not consciously applied) method to gently—and with no shame or blame—encourage the person to change their ways . . . or to, on their own, decide to leave.

***(6) Cultivating Your Social Capital in the Group.*** If you have high "social capital" personally, you will most likely be listened to and your ideas for the community considered seriously. If you have low social capital, no matter how articulate your proposals or relevant your ideas, your ideas may be dismissed or ignored. Fortunately, there are things we can do to increase our own social capital and hence personal effectiveness in a group . . . and help the whole community thrive. Role-playing exercise.

Other topics touched on in the first day include the Rock Polisher Effect, the Lightning Rod Effect, and the Future Community Success Assessment Tool.

How we can use the Empowered Member/Disempowered Member model and Robert Gilman's insights on "multiple centers of initiative" to understand and benefit our community and ourselves.

*Includes handout booklet.*

***Sunday, February 15:***

Includes: Case histories—how two successful communities found and financed their property. When an individual or couple owns the land. Triple-net lease. Raw, developed, and turn-key property. Cost, zoning, members, mortgage payments, jobs. Three sources of financing. Three ways to own property.

When one person buys or finances the property. Personal loans. Owner financing. Revolving Loan Funds. Determining the group's assets. Helping less affluent members afford it. Income and expenses. Can people afford to live there? The relationship between individually owned parcels with deeds and the community's ability to choose its members—and why this is important. Checklist for legal entities. LLCs, 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Land trusts, conservation easements.

How zoning works, seeking a zoning variance/special-use permit. Urban refugee syndrome. Learning from cohousing designers. Community buildings. When is sustainable building not really sustainable?

Creating a village-scale economy.  
The Gifting Circle process.  
*Includes handout booklet.*

### **What People Say about the Workshop:**

**"Worth six months of individual research on how to form a new community."**

—David Boddy, San Mateo, California

**"Completely surpassed my expectations . . .** Diana is a wonderful teacher — knowledgeable, engaging, and thoughtful. . . . I highly recommend this workshop!"

—Brooke Lehman, Bluestockings Bookstore, New York

**"I was blown away.** I most enjoyed the participatory exercises and Diana's enthusiasm and sense of humor."

—Ben Schwartz, Wassiac, New York

**"Your workshop was fantastic** — I got a great deal out of it. . . . **Thank you for being so friendly, passionate, and humorous."**

—William Faith, Los Angeles

"Diana is amazing, and *everything* she covered was of paramount importance to me, especially **getting a clearer picture of decision-making methods and consensus, how to deal with 'structural conflict,' and the 'trust and connection' exercise** with the people in the middle of the circle."

—Raquel Iturbe, Ashland, Oregon

"Truly astounding! Clear, concise, direct, informed, and fun. Your workshop **powerfully distilled both what I have and have not learned from 20 years of exploring community.**"

—Don St. Clair, Eugene, Oregon