"Open Source" Use Agreement for Visiting Groups

Background:
The idea behind "open source" is to promote free access to a resource. In the case of open source software, users are given the source code and are encouraged to use and improve that resource through whatever means they have available—paying for it, adding to or modifying it, sharing it with others, etc. Likewise, we think of the Common House as a resource to be shared and improved upon. Rather than charging for this resource, we will be transparent about the actual costs for the use of the space, offering some examples of ways people might contribute. This could mean a group using the Common House might pay a fee that is commensurate with the group’s budget, they might choose to volunteer at a workday, or identify a community need and find a way to fulfill it.

We see this as a more dynamic and open approach to sharing our Common House than a set fee structure, as guests are invited to add value to our community in whatever way is comfortable for them.

The Agreement:
Cobb Hill will allow use of the Common House by groups, according to our Common Rules and Agreements, with no fixed Use Fee. Instead we will invite people to contribute as they feel moved, and will provide them with information about how they might contribute to the costs of use, the improvement of the space, or to the support of community goals. We then leave it up to the user to decide if and how they will contribute. This is much like a voluntary fee structure, except we would be more open about the needs of the community and the user would have freedom to choose how to contribute.

Message to potential visiting groups
We are happy to host your group in our Common House. While we do not have a set fee for meeting use, we do recognize that Cobb Hill members devote time, energy, and resources to the maintenance, upkeep, and improvement of this space. These costs range from the very large (staining the outside of the common house, adding a carpet runner to muffle sounds on the stairs, etc.) to the relatively small, like the expenses for common house supplies. Often groups who make use of the space feel moved to give back in order to support the maintenance of the space for others who may come after. We have had donations of a rug for the den, an outdoor grill for use by large groups, and a fire safety ladder. Other groups have made financial contributions to help pay for supplies and upkeep. And other groups have offered “sweat equity” by stacking wood or weeding gardens. Any contribution of time, talent or treasure, while not required, would be appreciated.

Open Source Agreement, 2013